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TAGS: [EUN](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IS](#) [RS](#) [UP](#) [EI](#)
SUBJECT: IRISH VIEWS ON THE JANUARY 26-27 FOREIGN MINISTERS
MEETING (GAERC)

REF: A. A DUBLIN 38
[1](#)B. B STATE 4297

Classified By: Pol/Econ Section Chief Ted Pierce; Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) On January 22, PolOff delivered reftel demarche to Brian Glynn, European Correspondent, Department of Foreign Affairs. Glynn stated that in light of the current situation in the Middle East, the agenda has been pared back dramatically and will include only the Middle East, Russia-Ukraine, and Guantanamo. Ireland is supportive of the EU position towards Israel, and further, joins a small group of EU nations in supporting the proposed UN inquiry into the breach of humanitarian law. Ireland is committed to a unified EU approach to the Russia-Ukraine gas dispute. Finally, Glynn cited recent statements by Minister for Justice Ahern that Ireland would be willing to accept Guantanamo detainees as a part of a broader EU resettlement program (Reftel A). He questioned the objectivity of the Czech Presidency, but indicated that it has thus far made good progress in the gas dispute issue. End Summary.

Middle East

[1](#)2. (C) Glynn stated the EU's top priorities are border crossings, continuance of the cease fire, and humanitarian aid. He believes that the near term strategy will be the primary focus and that the January 23 meeting will result in further details of the strategy. During the January 21 meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Livni, the EU stressed that Israel had 27 friends in the room and that they were focused on improving conditions on the ground that would allow them to deepen that friendship. Glynn added that Ireland is fully supportive of the proposed UN inquiry into the breach of humanitarian law and that it is joined at present by Belgium, Cyprus, and Greece. He stated that Ireland will support the UN Secretary General's goals, whatever they may be.

Russia-Ukraine

[1](#)3. (C) Glynn believes that the Czech presidency has been relatively successful in navigating the gas dispute issue. He added that it is extremely important that the EU have a strong unified voice lest Russia "pick them off one by one." The issue has not been at the forefront of Irish policy as Ireland is at the tail end of the pipeline. However, he referred to remarks made by Eamon Ryan, Ireland's Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources that it is bizarre that Ireland is having this problem when it has its

own gas reserves off-shore.

Guantanamo

¶4. (C) On January, 20, a spokesman for the Minister for Justice indicated that Ireland would be willing to accept inmates if the EU adopts such an agreement. Glynn suggested that this policy change is being driven by two key developments. First, EU countries feared being seen as complicit with the Bush administration. The inauguration of President Obama lifts this barrier. Second, the global economic crisis has greatly limited the funds available to provide real assistance on large issues such as Afghanistan. As a result, Glynn believes that the EU will agree to a program and that this will be a relatively "quick win."

Comment

¶5. (C) As an aside, Glynn indicated that the Czech presidency has performed poorly in its handling of the issues surrounding the middle east peace process and that it is not perceived as an objective president. He likened it to an Irish proverb "sense through the head"- the Czechs are rushing in at full speed without the range of experience to support their actions and as a result, are hitting their heads on sharp corners. End Comment.
FAUCHER